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# Bend the Curve CIP-News - June, 2007

Bend the Curve Continuous Improvement Practitioners

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### You are the One



Did you know that in the entire world there is no one like you?

No one.

You are so unique that if you needed an organ transplant there would be no one that would be a perfect match for you. That's about 6 billion people and counting. You are that special.

All life has evolved to be able to identify self, you, from non-self, me. In those ancient seas so long ago, the ability for living things to identify self from non-self may have been one of the very first life processes to ever evolve. It is a form of protection, against things that might harm us, without which we would all quickly die. We know this process in our own physical bodies as the immune system.

I like to think of Bend-the-Curve as State government's immune system, and Continuous Improvement Practitioners (CI-Ps) play a central role in the maintenance and protection of its health. You probably have never thought about your role as a CI-P in quite this way.

All organisms and organizations are at risk of going extinct if they are unable to adapt to changing environments without loss of their unique Identity. We would never expect DHHS to become Sam's Club for example.

Organizations, large or small, spend their energy (i.e. time, people, and money) on two things that promote survival. One is maintaining their unique internal Identity (we are DHHS). The other is adapting to external change (meeting customer demand).

Balancing both of these processes is what the science of Lean Management is all about. Organizations are at risk for survival if they ignore one of these processes at the expense of the other. Too much focus on Identity and the organization becomes bureaucratic (e.g. too much time talking to itself and not its customers). Too much time spent on Adaptation and it loses its Identity altogether.

It is a delicate balance to manage both of these processes. If not enough energy is spent in either area, organizations like governments can and do go extinct just like other life forms. This happens because the organization, or organism for that matter, no longer is capable of recognizing that it is unique, that is, it no longer knows, or cares, why it is here and what it is here to do (i.e. it has lost its Identity).

As waste and its resulting inefficiency build up, not only can it no longer do what it is designed to do, it no longer can identify itself as itself. Are you with me on this?

June 2007

Volume 2, Issue 6

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#### Special points of interest:

- Next Clinicals
  - > June 15
  - > July 20
- DOP 1-4 now 9/17-21/2007

Cont'd on p.4 —

# Notes on the May 18<sup>th</sup> Clinical Supervision

## Check-In

- Focus in government is on complaint resolution, not process improvement or product development. Complaints are actually an opportunity for either.
- Consider Legislature as customers when they complain? Are they customers of a different value stream? (Depends on whether there is a different process.....)
- DMV should be managed as if the customer is the one getting the registration, not as if the taxpayer is the customer.
- Use of military terms to describe nurturing and supportive process is a poor match. Need to alter the vocabulary. "He who controls the language controls the mind."

## Lean Learnings — *We Don't Make Widgets* by Ken Miller

The lively discussion focused principally on the concept of *Customer*. It was decided to continue the *Widget* discussion at the next Clinical.

- Concept of roles involving "suppliers," "brokers," and "customers."
- Concept of "customer" clearer when product ("widgets") is defined first.
- Distinguishing "customer" from "end user". Not equating "payer" with the "customer". If process exists to satisfy a judge, then he is the end user in the process. To what end am I doing.....?
- Need consensus alignment for who is the customer. Need to be more careful that agreement is reached.
- One item for discussion is naming initiator. Another is that we need to have the big picture before we go after the small items.
- 3 Criteria: Customer of contingent service; process end user as definer of value; customer defined by product. (When product changes, customer changes.)
- Customers are also in roles. Role is activities and task in process.

### 3 Roles:

1. End users use widget for desired outcome.
2. Brokers transfer product to others who use or make it more accessible.
3. Fixers transform (add value), repair, or correct product for end user.

Distinction of charter and process. CI-P's responsibility at the chartering session is to encourage the client to look beyond. Should identify customer for the event to help define the event and the widget involved. Result will clarify at the event.

We assume root causes for many programs and neglect to identify movement to other programs when needed. Example is repeat unemployment. Is it being used as substitute for vacation? Is there undisclosed family violence or handicap?

## Open Forum

Intervention Teams & Need for Lean Learning: Chip discussed his recent experience with the OIAS Eligibility Review VSM. He noted that the two/three-day process is not enough time to do lean learning & believes that the team could have been more effective if there had been more time to introduce and teach lean concepts. He noted that, as sometimes with other intervention teams, this team believed that they knew what the problem was and that it couldn't be solved under the current system.

Merle & Peter echoed Chip's sentiments: Not enough time in two days to teach lean. Group discussion surfaced that, in addition, a lack of preparation by team members is a given. There was consensus that we must find a way to work around it. A too-common reaction from team members is also that each knows THE answer, tho' this is usually just AN answer. Team members may not know the whole process, just a part of it—the part they are directly involved with. The whole Team has the best understanding of the whole process. "I know it" means I haven't accepted I'm in a process.

It was noted that there is often a lack of agreement on performance objectives, with negotiation up and down layers of an organization. However, "layer management" is not in place, resulting in incremental (or worse, partial) changes — lack of shared clarity on charter.

**BTC Calendar:** Lita briefly reminded CI-Ps to post their BTC/Lean events on the BTC Calendar. This would enable CI-Ps to see what was coming up and to match CI-P development needs to events and event needs. The CI-Ps went on to discuss the possibility of/need for an online BLOG or chat room.

**Non-Standard Interventions:** Tim asked, “Whose call is it for non-standard events?” As an example, he reported on a Kaizen event that he facilitated for the Commissioner’s office that was far from the standard. He was approached for only a four-hour event. This brought up the question of how does a CI-P handle a request like this?

Arthur stressed that we, as practitioners, should never simply acquiesce to a request for a 4-hour event. In this instance, Arthur explained, he had insight into the process and knew that this event required only the development of a process flow chart — which he felt could be accomplished in the four hours. As a result, he approved Tim’s facilitation of this event.

**It was made clear that decisions re: BTC/CI-P facilitation of non-standard interventions will be made by Art (DOL) or Walter (DHHS).** The CI-Ps discussed recent examples of non-standard events and the need to be disciplined and intentional about their use and outcome. It was also recognized that non-standard events call for greater and/or specialized knowledge and skills and affect the choice of CI-Ps assigned.

**Intervention/VSM Managers:** Lita started a discussion focusing on the role of the VSM Manager. Based on her experience and observation, she was concerned that the Managers, almost all of whom don’t know about managing in/toward a Lean environment or managing a lean implementation (plan), are really left without guidance. She has begun drafting a very basic and brief Intervention Manager’s guide that could be provided at the time of contracting/chartering. She will send out the rough draft to the CI-Ps (and Managers?) for review and comment and would like suggestions even beforehand about content.

John Rioux explained that he was recently a manager of a project and felt that managers don’t understand the enormity of the proposed projects. However, it was suggested that we shouldn’t make the role of the intervention/VSM Manager so daunting that no one wants to take it on — and having co-managers across departments is even more difficult.

The point is to manage discrete processes efficiently and aggregate into general objectives. Profit (in business) = Budget (in public service) discussion. Change is very often based on random events. It is important to have a process to and to distinguish and the non-random events leading to variability. That is a prerequisite to controlling the process which in turn is a pre-requisite to quality achievement. The process to distinguish is very often missing and/or ignored (i.e. we don’t bother to have the discussion).

### **VSM Process & Design**

Walter presented/reviewed the 3-day VSM design that DHHS has been increasingly using. The design breaks out: Day One = Current State; Day Two = Future State; Day Three = Implementation Plan & Follow-up. He noted that the expansion to 3 days resulted from the recognition that 2-day VSMS did not allow for enough time for the team to develop adequate implementation plans or any significant Lean learning. While the standard is for consecutive days, he explained that in some instances it has been necessary to separate the sessions to varying degrees, generally for logistical reasons.

Even with this expanded time, he said, it has become increasingly clear that the interventions teams need to be exposed to lean learning before the intervention. The possibility of developing a brief (2-4hr.) required Lean training is being explored. This may give the team members a better foundation for the intervention itself and may also alleviate the problem of team members going back to work and it being work as usual.

### ***Next Month’s Clinical Supervision: July 20th***

Please make every effort to attend. These are critical sessions for your professional development, certification, and the success of your CI-P work.

# Lean TIPS



Remember this tool? An Impact/Effort-Based Framework & Grid can help you to assist intervention teams in prioritizing implementation plan activities.

		<b>-- Effort --</b>	
		Difficult To Do	Easy To Do
<b>-- Impact --</b>	Major Improvement	3.	1.
	Minor Improvement	4.	2.

1. Easy to do & yields a big improvement.
2. Easy to do but yields a small improvement.
3. Difficult to do but yield a big improvement.
4. Difficult to do but yields a small improvement.

- 
1. Items are implemented immediately.
  2. Items are also implemented immediately.
  3. Items are the subject of detailed action planning.
  4. Items are discarded.

-- Ingrid Bens, M.Ed., *Facilitation at a Glance*, p.148

## BTC-Lean Events

Date	Time	Topic	Location	Contact
June 15	8-4:30	Clinical Sup	CCD	AD
June 18-22	8-4:30	DOP 1-4 Planning	Greenlaw	
July 2	2 - 4	DHHS CIP	Greenlaw	WEL
July 20	8-4:30	Clinical Sup	CCD	AD
Aug 6	2 - 4	DHHS CIP	Greenlaw	WEL
Aug 17	8-4:30	Clinical Sup	CCD	AD
Sept 17-21	8-4:30	DOP 1-4	China Lake Conf. Center	

\* To see/add more events & detail, go to the *Bend the Curve* Calendar in Outlook's *Public Folders*.

# You are the One (cont'd from p. 1)

The role of a CI-P, to my way of thinking, has evolved to help our organization -- state government -- to survive because we are especially trained to assist in rooting out waste and inefficiency that threaten who we are and what we do. We assist government in becoming more efficient and more viable, more responsive, and more able to do what it is supposed to do.

This is what our training is all about. Our success is based on our ability to be able to perform this function, and we get really good at this when we do two things: practice and learn more. Hence, the importance of on-going growth opportunities such as Clinical Supervision, Certification, and the Development of Practitioners sessions.

Like our own immune system, we need to be ready at all times, to be vigilant and skilled, and to know when to act and what to do. So, in a sense, part of maintaining our Identity as CI-Ps is to grow - which, interestingly enough, is another unique and important characteristic of all life. To grow is to learn how to respond to new challenges that threaten our ability to maintain our unique Identity. There is no learning, no growth, without that challenge. And for CI-Ps that challenge is practice. As we get better at what we do, we make our organization better and faster and cheaper (and just possibly smaller, hence Lean).

Stepping forward as a CI-P makes you very special. It makes you very unique in many ways -- be in no doubt of the important work you do.

But there is one more important thing to mention, the really amazing part, even though you are so special, the real you is not inside you but outside you. This means even though we are all unique, we are all One.

— *Walter E. Lowell*

# BTC-Lean Intervention Highlights

## ➤ HETL/MeCDC Environmental Chemistry Work Flow Process Improvement

Sponsor: Jack Krueger  
Managers: Peter Smith & Tom Crosby

Facilitators: Walter Lowell & Rae-Ann Brann

Environmental testing involves a complex workflow, due in part to the need to do multiple analyses on a single sample. Complex instrumentation is vulnerable to up-time issues, and IT problems create re-work. This work process takes place across multiple management sections of the laboratory, and the process was not yet fully visible or standardized. The aim for this VSM was to visualize the workflow in this section in order to make improvements that will reduce lead-time, improve uptime, and reduce re-work.

Bookends: Receive sample → Send report. The actual testing of the sample is not included in the VSM.

Status: 😊 The HETL completed Current State and Future State value stream maps on the Environmental Chemistry work flow. The Implementation Plan session is scheduled for June 28th in the Greenlaw Auditorium. Both VSM Managers, Tom Crosby and Peter Smith, have played an active role in leading the teams in this work. The Sponsor, Jack Krueger, also attended and contributed to the future session.

## ➤ Payroll—DAFS Process Improvement

Sponsor: Rebecca Wyke  
Manager:

Facilitators: Walter Lowell & Jon Kirsch

Processing payroll statewide has become a challenge for State departments: a) Under-utilization of staff; 2) No backup systems; 3) Errors resulting in inaccurate payments; 4) Inadequate internal controls; and 5) Bottlenecks within the process, i.e. merit increases.

While some progress has been made with updated technologies it is necessary to continue integrating statewide payroll services to provide the ability to share resources across agencies as well as improve services for all employees.

Status: 😊 The Payroll Team met several times during May to complete its Current State map in order to reflect the several current payroll processes. The charter was refined in the first session to capture some important features of the payroll process that the original charter did not take into account. The Service Centers, DOT, MMA, and DOC payroll processes were all included in the CS activity. Representatives of the various offices that participated in the CS mapping were involved in completing the Future State, with many opportunities for improvement identified. They will meet again on June 27 to complete the Implementation Plan.



# BTC-Lean Intervention Highlights

## ➤ DHHS-OES Financial/Estate Management Process Improvement

Sponsor: Karen Elliott  
Manager: Cherie Wenzel

Facilitators: Jane French & Cheryl Ring

This VSM looks at financial/estate management for public wards and protected persons (i.e. setting up accounts, authorizing what needs to be sent by way of “payables” for clients, etc.) starting when OES gets court papers in hand appointing it as fiscal agent (guardian or conservator) for the individual and ending when this relationship is terminated.

Status: 😊 Current and Future States have been mapped. The statewide OES Team completed a first cut of its draft implementation plan on 6/11 in Bangor. The team will review and refine this plan.

## ➤ Prior Authorization—MaineCare Process Improvement

Sponsor: Brenda McCormick  
Manager: Julie Tosswill

Facilitators: Terry Sandusky & Anne O'Brien

The MaineCare Authorization Unit processes over 18,000 requests annually for prior authorization (PA) of certain services & durable medical equipment and supplies. A health care provider submits a request for PA on behalf of a member, including documentation establishing medical necessity. A request is typically approved, denied, or deferred. Approved requests are issued & given a PA number, which must be put on the provider's claim form in order to receive payment. All documents must be maintained for 7 years.

VSM Objectives: To reduce the 30-day turnaround time for processing a PA request; to establish time benchmarks for reviewing requests according to service type; and to optimize phone call management.

Status: 😊 Because of the multiple Prior Authorization processes, the three-day VSM has been extended to four days. The preliminary drafts of the team's work will be completed by July 15th.

## New Interventions:

- Case Mix. OMS/DHHS
- Youth Transition to Adult Services Process. OIS / DHHS. Manager: Holly Stover

\*\*\* If you're interested in observing, leading, or co-leading opportunities, contact Walter Lowell (287-4307)

\*\*\* For additional detail, refer to the Summary of Improvement Intervention statuses on the BTC Intranet site.

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The following two VSM teams have completed their implementation plans, are addressing the change activities, and continue to hold monthly progress meetings:

## ➤ DHHS-OIAS Eligibility Review Process Improvement

Sponsors: Sabra Burdick & Barbara Van Burgel  
Managers: Tom Keyes & Peter Staples  
Facilitators: James Fussell & Clough Toppan

## ➤ Information Resources (IR) Access Process Improvement \*

Sponsors: Jim Lopatosky & Don F. Williams  
Managers: Karen Curtis & Holly Pomelow  
Facilitators: Terry Sandusky & Lita Klavins

\* See the DHHS *In Focus* newsletter for a description of the May 8th IR Access/HETL Study Mission.



The primary purpose of the *Bend the Curve* Team is to provide support, consultation, assistance, and leadership in process and other improvement approaches and activities for State staff and work teams as they seek to continually improve their work culture, procedures, processes, and environments – in order to meet the mission of the department and the expectations of Maine citizens.

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**DOP 1-4  
 Rescheduled to  
 Sept. 17-21**

The 5-day CI-P introductory training has been rescheduled to September 17-21. This is the time originally scheduled for DOP 2-2 (which is being moved up to at least October). If there's anyone you think should attend DOP 1, please encourage them to apply now. Nominations from the supervisors (whose support & agreement to pay are required) are to be sent to Arthur and/or Walter. Remember, [you can also play an important role at the DOP itself by volunteering to present and/or facilitate specific learning/practice segments.](#)

**BTC Continuous Improvement Practitioners:  
 Intervention Facilitation Status**

DHHS		DOL		DAFS	
Kate D. Carnes	L	Jorge A. Acero	O	Rae-Ann Brann	L
Nancy Desisto	L	Michael T. Brooker	CL	Wendy Christian	O
Jane French	L	Stephen C. Crate	IA	Rebecca S. Greene	L
James Fussell	L	Arthur S. Davis	C	Lyndon R. Hamm	CL
Kimberly Johnson	C	Merle A. Davis	L	Alicia Kellogg	C
Julita Klavins	L	Peter D. Diplock	O	Billy J. Ladd	CL
Don Lemieux	C	Anita C. Dunham	IA	Michaela T. Loisel	L
Muriel Littlefield	L	Karen D. Fraser	L		
Walter Lowell	L	Timothy J. Griffin	L		
Jack Nicholas*	O	Matthew K. Kruk	O	<b>DOT</b>	
Ann O'Brien	L	James J. McManus	CL	Michael Burns	C
Cheryl Ring	CL	Bruce H. Prindall	L	Sam McKeeman	IA
Terry Sandusky	L	John L. Rioux	L	Jeffrey Naum	O
Jeffrey Shapiro	IA	Sheryl J. Smith	L	Robert Slocum	O
Clough Toppan	CL	David F. Welch	L		
				<b>DEP</b>	
				Carmel A. Rubin	IA

* Community CI-P	IA - Inactive	C - "Champion" for Lean	
L - Lead	CL - Co-Lead	O - Learning Observer	